

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00781 171133Z

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ACTION AGR-08

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PASS TREASURY AND AGRICULTURE FROM POATS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGD: EFIN, EAID, EGEN, SA

SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL AND WATER ASPECTS OF US-SAUDI JOINT
COMMISSION MEETING

1. SAG PROMULGATED FEB 14 COMPREHENSIVE QUOTE NATIONAL POLICY ON AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD UNQUOTE WHICH ESTABLISHES AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES AND GOVERNMENTAL COMMITMENTS TO SUPPORT ACHIEVEMENT OF GREATLY REDUCED DEPENDENCE ON FOOD IMPORTS AND PREVENT EXCESSIVE IMBALANCE BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL SOCIETIES. POLICY IS BIASED TOWARD PRIVATE SECTOR, WITH EXTENSIVE GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVES.

2. SAG EXPECTS SHORTLY TO ESTABLISH A CORPORATE AGENCY CALLED AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WHICH WILL ESTABLISH SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES (HOPEFULLY WITH RISING PRIVATE PARTICIPATION) TO CONDUCT LAND AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND IRRIGATION PROJECTS AND PRODUCTION, PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES. CORPORATION WILL, ACCORDINGLY TO CHARTER, OPERATE ONLY WHERE PRIVATE SECTOR UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO MEET NEEDS SET FORTH IN NEW NATIONAL

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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 00781 171133Z

AGRICULTURAL POLICY.

3. THESE PLANS, REFLECTED AND TO VARYING DEGREES PROJECTIZED IN FOOD AND WATER SECTORS OF NEW FIVE-YEAR PLAN, CONSTITUTE EXCELLENT FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE,

PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND SALES UNDER JOINT COMMISSION PROGRAM. COPIES OF AGRICULTURE POLICY AND DRAFT STATUTE OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BEING HAND CARRIED TO WASHINGTON BY DICKMAN. RELEVANT SECTIONS OF FIVE-YEAR PLAN PROMISED IN TIME FOR EMBASSY REP TO HAND CARRY SHORTLY BEFORE JOINT COMMISSION MEETING.

4. DISCUSSIONS WITH MIN AG AND WATER HASSAN MISHARI, PRINCE FAHAD, PLANNING MINISTER HISHAM NASSER, SOLAIM AND OTHER BROUGHT OUT STRONG SAG DETERMINATION TO ACCOMPLISH RAPID AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT. PARTICULAR STRESS GIVEN TO WATER (WELL-BASED IRRIGATION SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY SCALE DESALINIZATION PLANTS) AND COMPREHESIVE EXPLOITATION OF UNDEVELOPED AREAS OF POTENTIAL CROP PRODUCTION THROUGH CORPORATE AND CONTRACT FARMING, AND SUPPORTING TRAINING, RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROGRAMS. FOREIGN, ESPECIALLY US, PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION IS SOUGHT BY SAG IN BOTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRODUCTION.

5. U.S. PARTICIPATION IN JOINT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY IN JCRR PATTERN IS NOT SOUGHT OR APPARENTLY NEEDED, BUT A SERIES OF EXTENDED VISITS (ADDITIONAL TO OCCASIONAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS) BY HIGHLY QUALIFIED U.S. ADVISRERS TO MIN AG/ WATER WOULD BE WELCOMED, PARTICULARLY FOR REASON INDICATED IN PARA 6 BELOW. PRIMARY NEEDS ARE THOSE AGREED IN AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP FOR SPECIALISTS TO SUPPLEMENT STAFF OF MINISTRY AND ADVISE IN DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION/TRAINING AND RESEARCH AND EXTENSION. MINISTER PREFERS BUREAU OF RECLAMATION STAFFING OF WATER MANAMGEMENT ADVISORY POSITIONS AGREED TO IN WORKING GROUP. TECHNICAL PERSONNEL FROM USG SHOULD BE ON USG ROLES UNDER TCA.

6. MINISTRY WANTS TO MOVE IMMEDIATELY INTO FEASIBILITY STUDY OF WATER AND LAND DEVELOPMENT OF WADI DAWASIR AND SOON THEREAFTER SEVERAL OTHER PROMISING AREA SCHEMES. RECOGNIZING USG'S IN-ABILITY TO ADVISE SAG IN SELECTION OF ENGINEERING/ECONOMICS FIRM FEASIBILITY STUDY CONTRACT, HASSAN MISHARI WELCOMED USG HELP IN GETTING UNDER TCA A PRIVATE CONSULTATN WHO COULD OBJECTIVELY ASSIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREQUALIFYING FIRMS FOR SELECTION BY SAG THROUGH COMPETITIVE OR SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT. HOPES NAMES OF SEVERAL POSSIBLE CANDIDATES

FOR THIS SHORT TERM CONSULTANCY CAN BE OFFERED TO DEPUTY MINISTER IN WASHINGTON FEB 26. SIMILAR CONSULTANCEIS RE SELECTION OF UNIVERSITY TEAMS AND DESALINIZATION PLANT CONTRACTORS WILL BE NEEDED SOON THEREAFTER.

7. RURAL HEALTH TEAMS DISCUSSED INCONCLUSIVELY IVS COMPETENCE
AND INTEREST SHOULD BE EXPLORED FOR POSSIBLE SIDE DISCUSSION
DURING SAG DELEGATION'S STAY IN WASHINGTON.
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